

THE CANDID EXAMINER.

"EXAMINE YOURSELVES, WHETHER YE BE IN THE FAITH ; PROVE YOUR OWN SELVES."—Paul.

VOL. 2.]

MONTROSE, PA. JAN. 8, 1826.

NO. 15

Examination of Rev. E. W. GOODMAN'S
Sermon, preached at Mount Pleasant.

At the time this sermon was published, it was expected something would appear in reply, which was promised by the Examiner ; but as the columns of the Examiner were then and sometime afterwards crowded with other matter, it has been neglected. As some notice of this sermon, is still expected & desired, though on account of its length we have not room to insert it entire, yet we will say before our readers in our examination, its most prominent and important parts. Mr. Goodman, in this sermon, has attempted thoroughly to refute the joy inspiring doctrine of the final restitution, and so of course, chose for his text the 45th verse of the 25th chapter of Matthew, "*And these shall go away into everlasting punishment ; but the righteous into life eternal.*"

His application of this text we shall not notice at present, as he merely assumes, without any argument, his application, and then proceeds in an "attempt to show First, that *reason alone* teaches, that the everlasting punishment of the finally impenitent, is not inconsistent, either with the holiness, goodness, or mercy of God." According to this order, he proceeds :

"First, then, *Reason teaches us, that the everlasting punishment of the finally impenitent is not inconsistent with the holiness of God.*"

Mr. Goodman has committed a mistake in his first setting out ; he has assumed what alone was necessary for him to establish. To have met universalists at the point in dispute ; he should have *proved*, instead of *assuming*, that there will be the "finally impenitent." By doing this he would have sapped the very foundation of the doctrine of the restitution ; for no universalist will contend that if there be any endlessly or finally impenitent, that such will be happy ; for this would dispute that immutable law established in the nature of things.

Universalists believe, that God "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," and that Jesus came to do his "father's will, and to finish his work." For this end he was "exalted—to be a prince and a saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." "God also to the Gentiles hath granted repentance unto life." This work of repentance will continue till it meets a glorious termination in the *reconciliation of all things to God*. Mr. G. proceeds to state, "that God is holy and infinitely so," &c. After using some arguments to prove this universally received position, he defines the infinite holiness of God as follows :

"This infinite holiness, all will admit, to be an immeasurable quality, belonging to the mind of an immaterial and infinite being."

The reader will bear in mind this defini-

tion, while he reads his explanation of sin, and his arguments to prove that sin is an infinite evil :

" On the other hand it may now be asked, what is sin ? and the question may be answered by saying, it is a quality of *mind or thought directly* opposed to holiness ; but to what part of holiness is it opposed ? for it has just been shewn that perfect holiness is immeasurable and infinite. Is the holiness of God capable of being divided into parts ? If not, as all will readily admit, then, in the opposition of sin to holiness, how can it be limited to a part, when there is nothing in the holiness of God that bears any resemblance to a part of a thing. It is clear that sin in its opposition to holiness cannot be thus limited. If it is opposed to holiness at all, it is opposed to holiness as a perfect whole. But holiness, as an attribute or quality of the mind of the eternal God, is *infinite* ; therefore the evil quality of sin, which *finite* as the holiness itself ; and so sin becomes evidently at once, an *infinite evil*."

If our readers are really surprised at the consequences of our sermonizer's conclusion, their feelings accord with our own. He concludes that " the evil quality of sin which stands opposed to holiness, must be as *infinite* as the holiness itself." Well he defines " infinite holiness to be an immeasurable quality, belonging to the mind of an immaterial and infinite being ;" therefore " the evil quality of sin," if it is as " infinite as the holiness itself," must " be an immeasurable quality, belonging to the mind of an immaterial and infinite being." We presume Mr. Goodman himself, from a review of this subject, will not admit that " the evil quality of sin" is " an immeasurable quality belonging to the mind of an immaterial and infinite being." Yet this is

the identical circumstance into which his arguments have involved him. But leaving out that part of his definition which requires " the evil quality of sin," in order to make it " as *infinite* as the holiness itself," to belong " to the mind of an immaterial and infinite being," we enquire, is sin an *immeasurable quality* ? Jesus while accusing the Pharisees of the long and black catalogue of their sins, added " fill ye up then the measure of your fathers." It appears by this, that the sin of these wicked Pharisees was *measurable*, and that then they had not arrived to the *measure* of their fathers ; and even when they had *filled up the measure of their fathers*, their sins would not then be *immeasurable*, as the sin of their fathers was described by measure.

The reader is requested to dwell on Mr. Goodman's reasoning a little longer. He says " that perfect holiness is immeasurable and infinite," and then argues that *sin* of course is *infinite*, because it is opposed to *holiness*. It is perfectly clear, that this conclusion destroys all degrees of sin. The *least sin* is opposed to holiness ; therefore the least sin is " immeasurable & infinite—as *infinite* as the holiness itself." That which is immeasurable, is incapable of being measured—and nothing can be added to that which is infinite : But the prophet Isaiah (chap. 30. 1.) speaks of those who " add sin to sin : " Therefore these people certainly *added* to their sin. Again, God said to his people Israel (Ezk. 16. 51, 52.) " Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins ; but thou has mul-

tiplied thine abominations more than they. Bear thine own shame for thy sins that thou hast committed more abominable than they: they are more righteous than thou." Here we learn that Samaria had not committed half the sins of Israel; and that Israel *multiplied* their abominations *more than they*. If sin is infinite because it is opposed to holiness, of course the sin of Samaria was infinite, yet their *infinite sin* did not amount to half the sins of Israel; therefore the sins of Israel must have been twice infinite! Again, if the evil quality of sin is infinite because it is opposed to holiness, how could God say to Israel, "bear thine own shame for the sins that thou hast committed more abominable than they!" This testimony makes it plain, that some sins are of a *more evil quality* or *more abominable* than others. Let the language of Jesus, also, be called into the assistance of this investigation. He said to Pilate when arraigned before him, "he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." (John 19. 11.) Now if "the evil quality of sin, which stands opposed to holiness, must be as *infinite* as the holiness itself," how can there be a "greater sin" than others? Certainly if there be a "greater sin" than another there must be a sin of a *more evil quality* than some others. Mr. Goodman concludes, "If then sin be an infinite evil," &c. "it *deserves to be punished*." But on this phantom of a conjured up theory of infinite sin, Mr. Goodman solely depends as a foundation upon

which to build the doctrine of endless punishment. Thus he writes as though he had sufficiently established what never can be established, so long as truth is truth, and error is error.

"But let it now be judged, whether our premises already shown to be true, do not as necessarily require the *eternal punishment* of the wicked, as their punishment at all, in the next world.—The argument stands thus; It has before been shewn, that the nature of sin is as *extensive* as the *holiness* against which it is committed. If then the punishment of sin is carried into the next world, it must of necessity, continue as long as the attribute of holiness continues; for while holiness is itself, all unpardoned sin stands opposed to it; so that when holiness shall *cease to be*, then shall the punishment of sin cease to be."

The reader by this time must duly comprehend the soundness of Mr. G's "premises," which he says are "already shewn to be true." In the last preceding extract we have these premises in a *little* different form of speech, though conveying the same sentiment as formerly. "It has before been shewn that the nature of sin is as *extensive* as the *holiness* against which it is committed." If this statement has been "shewn to be true," then the scriptures have been *shewn to be untrue*; for it contradicts scripture as plainly as any statement possibly can. The inspired Paul has said, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." If "sin is as *extensive* as the *holiness* against which it is committed"—if it is *immeasurable and infinite as the holiness itself*, how is it possible for grace to abound *much more* than sin? for grace cannot abound much more than *immeasurable and infinitely*. Thus the "pre-

mises" of Mr. Goodman, which he thought were shewn to be true, and on which he had suspended his all, for the support of endless torment, are like the airy bubbles which disappear at a touch. His premises have vanished before the light of scripture like the shadows of night before the bursting dawn, and his conclusions have consequently vanished with them. But we will look at his conclusions separate from his premises. They amount to the following, "the punishment of sin," &c. "must of necessity, continue as long as the attribute of holiness continues; for while holiness is itself, all unpardoned sin stands apposed to it; so that when holiness shall *cease to be*, then shall the punishment of sin *cease to be*." As long as sin exists, it will be punished; and Mr. G. would have accomplished his purpose, had he proved the endless continuance of sin in men. But it was not possible for him to have done this for the plain reason that the testimony of scripture is stronger than his reasoning. It was revealed to Daniel that the Messiah should come into the world "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity." Agreeable with this prediction, Paul testified that "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," and "by him to reconcile all things unto himself." Before such a sure prospect as this, with what assurance could John the Baptist exclaim, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." In the fulfilling of this divine work, the time shall ar-

rive that, "the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and *there shall be none*; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found." (Jer. 50. 20.) Were there any of the human family left out of that "great multitude which no man could number," who had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb?" No, for Jesus "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time;" and "the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion," &c. At the end of the prospect to which these testimonies point us, where is Mr. G's "unpardoned sin?" If it be sought for "there shall be none;" for Christ, then having *made an end of sins*, "they shall not be found." If God had revealed to us as plainly, that his *holiness shall cease to be*, as he has that sin shall *cease to be*; then Mr. G. might with propriety draw his conclusion, "that when holiness shall *cease to be*, then shall the punishment of sin *cease to be*." But not without.

(To be continued.)

The following letter from the universalist society of Sheshequin and Athens, to the Chenango branch association, having accidentally fallen in our hands, we have taken the liberty of inserting it; and beg the indulgence of its author for inserting it without asking his permission.

To the Ministers and Delegates of the Chenango Branch association of universalists, to be convened at German, Chenango county, state of N. York, the last Wednesday and Thursday of the present month:

The society of universalists, composed from the towns of Sheshequin and Athens, in Pennsylvania, send christian salutation.

Brethren,—Revolving time which rolls on with uninterrupted regularity, has placed upon the records of Eternity another

year since we had the pleasure of your social intercourse and heart cheering ministration in the village of Sheshequin. To the Partialist the contemplation of passing moments, and much more of passing years, must be attended with gloomy forebodings and horrible anticipations—While those of the Abrahamic faith have the heart cheering certainty of being *one step higher* on Jacobs ladder towards their happy and Eternal home. Contemplating this subject, and viewing the thralldom in which the mind of man has been enveloped for ages, and continues to be so in a great degree—It is matter of astonishment how mere man can so darken the minds of his fellow-men, by casting such a mist before their eyes as to render them unable to discover the goodness of their Heavenly Father, or the light of his countenance, which forever shines on the children of his creation—and in which there is *no dark spot*.

It may however be improper to say that *design* is at the bottom of this state of mental darkness, when it might be as true, & perhaps more charitable, to place a great share of it to the ignorance of teachers.—Be it which it may, it behooves us, by all fair and honest means in our power, to exert ourselves in dispelling, so far as we may, this worse than Egyptian darkness from the minds of our fellow men. As one of the means to bring about so desirable an end, to dispel the fog of superstition and ignorance—bigotry and religious despotism—We hail the plan of associating together in the manner of our societies, and felicitate the good cause—That “whether we meet on the highest hills or in the lowest valleys,” we need not the *shield of the law* to protect us from the licentious, or *guards to defend* us from the interruption of the rioters.—We can emphatically exclaim with the Psalmist—“Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” May we so continue to meet on earth, till time shall roll on that happy period, when we are all to meet “in that house not made with hands eternal in the Heavens.”

While we rejoice in the general prosperity and success of the cause of Universal holiness and happiness, we have to regret the want of ministering brethren in

this place. We anticipate the day however when we shall be prepared for other and better things—as we are gathering materials to erect us a meeting house for public worship,—which will undoubtedly be finished next summer.

Brethren accept the assurances of our steadfast and firm belief in that “Rock of Ages” upon which we are placing our ark of safety, and hope of immortality—accept also the assurances of our respectful remembrance of past favors, and believe us to be truly your brethren in the faith.

J. K.—y. Clerk of Soc.

Sheshequin, Aug. 22, 1826.

Examination by E. Ferriss.

Jude verse 7. “Even as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”

My beloved brethren who are in the faith which was once delivered to the saints concerning the universal grace of God, seeing the text before us, is often urged in support of the endless suffering of those people alluded to in it, it becomes our duty to give the text a candid examination for the benefit of every serious reader, and this let us do, God helping us, without twisting or altering the plain sense of the text, but allowing its full weight and measure.

We admit in the first place, that St. Jude was an inspired apostle of Christ, and wrote the truth, which we of course are bound to believe; but we are not bound to believe he meant any thing more than he has plainly expressed. Now the serious question is, has St. Jude in the text, expressed the endless suffering of the inhabitants of Sodom and of the cities about her. To decide this question, let the candid reader go with us into a close examination of this passage found in Jude. To this end let us lay aside all prejudice and carefully attend to the subject.

It appears plain from the text, that those anciently wicked inhabitants are set forth for an example to mankind in after ages—see the context. But where are they set forth for an example, in this world or in the invisible world? Ans. As we can have no realizing sense of an example in

that state, while living in this, the example must be set forth in this world.

Now where is this example to be found set forth in this world? Ans. In the sacred records of God's providential dealings with mankind in ancient times. In those records, we find the character of those ungodly people, and manner of their suffering a heavy judgment by fire for their wickedness; all which is set forth for a warning to mankind. The text before the reader says: "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Notice, kind reader, here are in this latter clause of the text, three very important words—i. e. "*suffering*," "*vengeance*," and "*eternal fire*." The first expresses their torment. The second the severe and powerful operation of fire on their consumable substance. The third and last only is called eternal. Now, whether St. Jude meant, by "*eternal fire*," to express a notion of the proper or absolute eternity of that element called fire, or not, is a question to be determined by the learned, who are well versed in the knowledge of the Greek root from whence the word eternal is derived. However, which way this should be decided, it cannot essentially effect the argument on the point in question. But if the text had called their suffering eternal, then it would effect the subject of inquiry whether their torment is endless or not. Now for my own part, I can see no good reason for believing in the endless torment of any order of beings, from the supposition that the eternal God punishes or chastises them for their wickedness. It cannot follow that their punishment is as durable as his existence, for then it would suppose none to be finally saved of all the human race, for God chastises all. And even should it be contended, that the fire is strictly eternal, which some have suffered the vengeance of, it would not follow, that because this was the case, their sufferings must be equally eternal. Some have suffered the vengeance of fire at the hands of wicked persecuting men. I should be very unwilling to contend that their suffering, in a future state, must last as long as fire and water shall exist. I allude to those who have been burnt at the stake, suffering martyrs, who are set forth for an example of christian fortitude, and holy perseverance,

suffering the vengeance of the fiery element. But the inhabitants of Sodom, and of the rest of the cities of the plain, were destroyed by fire for their sins, suffering the vengeance of fire, and are set forth in the sacred record, as an exemplary warning to all who should live ungodly in this imperfect world. The reader is now invited to read carefully the 16th chap. of Ezek. which faithfully and plainly declares the final estate of those very people alluded to by St. Jude, and promises a time when they shall be restored to their former estate.—N. B. Their former estate was a state of innocence; it was the first state of human nature. Their latter estate was a state of sin, in which condition they were slain by fire.

I could sincerely wish that people might not be so anxious for the endless misery of part of their fellow beings, as so frequently to apply passages to their favourite scheme, which are entirely silent on the subject; the learned, especially, we can hardly excuse, for they must know better. It's plain to be seen, that in the text we have been examining, there is not one deciding word about the duration of suffering punishment, we ought to be careful.

I shall now pass to another subject to be examined, i. e. conditions of eternal salvation, in order to ascertain the foundation of our dependence for endless life; and I find Christ said, before he was lifted up on the cross, "I, if I, be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." St. John, 12, 32. And this, we are informed, he spoke signifying what manner of death he *should die*, and not might *possible die* as a matter of uncertainty, but *should die*; yet it is expressed in conditional terms, as plainly as any other passage in the bible. Shall we call this conditional salvation? If so, the condition is already fulfilled, and all men will be drawn unto Christ of course. But I have a higher view of the subject still. I do not believe that the salvation of mankind was radically dependent on the willingness of Christ's humanity to be lifted up on the cross, but on the predeterminate counsel and purpose of God. Let me ask, was the purpose of infinite wisdom dependent on the human will in Christ, or is the human will dependent on the predetermined purpose of God?

You must know, gentle reader, all finite beings are dependent, and that God is independent; then of course, if you draw a fair inference, you must acknowledge that the will of man, is dependent on the will of God. It will follow that God had, according to the council of his own most holy will, predetermined that Christ should be lifted up from the earth, as an efficient means for the salvation of all men, and that his human will should acquiesce in the purpose of God, and this to be done, perfectly consistent with his agency. And what then was to follow as a consequence according to the purpose of God? Ans. All men to be drawn unto Jesus, and this to be effected as perfectly consistent with their moral agency, as the death of Christ was consistent with his agency, and no less certain to be effected in due time.—But why is it so often said in the gospel, “if ye believe,” &c. ? Ans. This mode of expression is used to show the relation of cause and effect, and not to imply, that the will of God depends on second causes for the attainment of any of their effects, for second causes and their effects must depend on his independent will. It was no less the will of God, that all men should finally be drawn unto Christ, than it was his will, that Christ should be lifted up. But how are men drawn unto Jesus? Ans. By grace through faith, no man comes to him in unbelief nor does any come to him unwillingly, but freely. It appears to me, that the main dispute between universalists and limitarians, must be this, whether all will finally be truly converted or not, for in the effects of true conversion, they are well agreed. Now the final conversion of all, we believe to be clearly revealed in the holy scriptures, and likewise the universal effect of such reconciliation; and we stand ready to show our sentiment on this subject to be correct by the authority of the Holy Scriptures. E. FERRISS.

Communicated on Dec. 15, 1826.

Suicide.—Mr. Calvin Easton of Milford, (Pa.) has fallen a victim to the soul-chilling and God-dishonoring doctrine of *infinite partiality and endless misery*. He recently became a convert to the calvinistic faith, under the ministrations of the Rev. Mr. G. The tremendous doctrine of

devils and damned spirits vociferated by this priest of modern Molock as from the lungs of brass, was more than he could bear—and his sincerity proved his destruction.—His mind became harrassed with the belief of an *endless hell* for the torment of sinners in a *future world*. He expressed doubts about the sincerity of his repentance, and despaired of salvation. He believed he had “eat and drank unworthily” and that he “was a reprobate, sealed to everlasting misery.”—Insanity was the consequence; and the distracted miserable man sought relief in suicide, on Tuesday last.—“Death the friend to the wretch, whom every friend forsakes,” kindly came to his relief, and he left in despair a world, where, he heard (instead of the gospel of life and salvation, breathing “peace and good will to men”) that pretended gospel thundering the anathemas of a revengeful and angry God.

Christ declares “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture.—The thief cometh not, but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” But, alas! this unfortunate man entered at a door where *no pasture could be found*—a door which led to death. Let the heralds of sanctimonious error and the instruments of mental distraction, remember that the blood of their victims will be required.

“*God is love.*” The blessed Jesus “healed all manner of diseases among the people.” His pretended followers afflict men with mental disease, the most agonizing and most incurable sickness that ever befell wretched man. Jesus Christ and his apostles never drove men to insanity.—On the contrary they relieved the sufferers, and cheered them with the tidings of peace and salvation.—“Do thyself no harm,” said Paul and Silas to the distracted jailor, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved thou and thy house.” No injunctions that he must believe in an *interminable hell* and all its concomitants.

Thus is presented another among the many instances which daily occur, of the awful consequences of that violent mode of conversion, where *threats* instead of *persuasion* are resorted to.

* Mr. Easton was a respectable man, and his remains were interred with masonic honors, in a manner corresponding with the character which he had borne.

POETRY.

Luke 24: 13—32.

Soon as the sun on Zion rolled the day,
Our pilgrims started reasoning on their way;
The tragic story they rehearsed again,
Of him who lived, was feared, was loved, yet slain.

Their theme of sorrow faltered on their tongue,
And sighs responded to their tale of doom:
For they had treasured hopes of future bliss,
And fondly looked for scenes of tranquil peace.
While thus they passed in solitude forlorn,
A stranger chanced that way of graceful form:
His gentle mien bespoke a friendly heart,
And angel love was in his aspect marked;
His hair in ringlets o'er his shoulders flowed,
And fairest beauty in his features glowed.
Like him who tracks the earliest dew wet grass,
And hears the breezes thro' the green wood pass,
Aurora healthy morning's maid to meet,
With ruddy roses blushing in her cheeks;
Just so the stranger wore the charms of health,
And cheerful look which spoke the peace he felt.
As he approached he bowed with modest grace
While hallowed friendship brightened in his face.

He gently asked the pilgrims why they wept,
And what misfortune caused their sore regret?
"Knowest thou not," replied the mourning pair,
"Why we of hope and happiness despair?
How that the hope of Salem now's no more,
And her fair king to death resigns his power?
We fondly hoped that he was born to reign,
And rear our city to her ancient fame;
So we'd been taught by those who could define
Prophetic records of the signs of times.
He rose, he prospered, but he now is dead,
And with him all our future hopes have fled."
No more could they relate—with streaming eyes,
They groan in sorrow, and in anguish sigh:
The sad remembrance bound their faltering tongue,

And as they ceased, the stranger thus begun,
"Ye are unwise to doom your hearts to pain,
For what you count as loss, shall prove your gain.

Your grief forego, and bear *this* in your mind,
Each revolution equals God's design.
Eternal wisdom's not forsook his plan,
That purposed happiness should fail to man,
But long as time shall stride his during steps,
Determined counsel shall completion meet,

And Salem's king, whose cruel fate you mourn,
Shall yet in blooming life to her return.
And though her brazen gates and massy walls,
And marble Temple to destruction fall;
And though the foe the war's last terror wage,
And dash destruction to his utmost rage,
Till every stone from its firm bed is tost'd,
And every trace of city grandeur's lost:
And though the beasts shall roar their dismal howl,

Where once did stand the arched city hall,
And winged dragons o'er its ruins pass,
And in thy streets shall crawl the poison Asp.
Though all these terrors on thy city come,
She shall be built—shall rise—shall reign—shall bloom.

When many years have rolled their lingering rounds,

After that Salem's walls are beaten down,
The measuring line shall then be stretched again,

And the foundations to her walls be lain,
Which shall be reared with choicest mountain stone,

While pearly gates their ample sides adorn.
Her temple too, in grandeur shall be reared,
And more than ancient splendor she shall wear.
Melchizedek, her promised king shall reign,
And countless subjects shall revere his name.
Earth's farthest regions shall his laws obey,
And goodly gifts of choicest riches pay.
And he shall bring the earth to tranquil peace,
And wars fell carnage shall forever cease;
No more stern warrior's clad in armor round,
Shall stretch their columns o'er the battle ground."

But now the stranger talked with mystic words
And wisdom's deepest wondrous truths inferred.
He taught how good from evil should proceed,
How death to Salem's king for good's decreed,
That he his destined glory might obtain,
And boundless kingdom—ever to remain;
That though the foolish weep, the vile complain,
Yet concord still in heaven's decrees remain;
That misery's tumult, strifes and dire alarms
Are common good, though individual harm.
These truths ne'er told before did he explain,
Until they reached their destined journey's end.
A village host who knew our pilgrim twain,
Welcomed our travellers to his dome again;
The sumptuous table was again prepared,
And thanks were offered by the stranger fair.
'Twas he! Our pilgrims looked with joyful gaze,
For they had heard that voice, when happier days
Taught them delight when Salem's king was praised.

'Twas he! they knew him, and they saw him rise,

In silent grandeur to his "native skies."